

7. Training and Exercises

7.1 Process by which the state will develop, manage, maintain and upgrade, or coordinate a statewide training and exercises program.

Montana is still in the early stages of deployment of the new interoperable communications system. Lewis & Clark County, the only entity that has deployed a P25, trunking-capable equipment, is also the only entity that has performed training for its users. The counties and Indian Nations of the Northern Tier are the entities that will next be providing training for their users. With a portion of the Northern Tier becoming operational sometime in the fall of 2007, this plan will be started during the winter of 2007, and will be completed by summer 2008.

The IMPD, the local jurisdictions, state and federal agencies are responsible for ensuring that exercises and training meet the needs of the users, agencies, and consortia in agreement with regulatory requirements. The SOP subcommittee will identify and coordinate the training content and needs as well as who will conduct the training. They will be coordinating with individual agencies at all levels and jurisdictions. In addition, the Law Enforcement and Fire Academies in the state will be providing updated training to their student curricula.

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is being used by many within the state to plan and coordinate statewide and local exercises. HSEEP will be used to guide the users of the enhanced, interoperable systems in the creation and on-going maintenance of local and state exercise plans.

Montana currently has a budget for training, and the first statewide training plan is being developed as part of the Northern Tier Interoperability Project (NTIP). The training is going to be of a “train-the-trainer” nature, with the first tier of students subsequently taking their training back home and acting as trainers themselves. Please see Appendix B for the Training Plan.

7.2 Offering and requiring training and exercises, as well as certification that will be needed.

The Communications Unit Leader (COML) course curriculum has been completed but is not yet being distributed by the NIMS Integration Center, nor have competency certification requirements been determined. Montana intends to use this course as a basis for training. Communication Unit Leaders and will comply with certification requirements once published.

An Operations Committee of the IMPD will work with each of the disciplines for subscriber user training to ensure that entry level and refresher training will meet the certification requirements. An Operations Committee will identify additional training needed and the responsible parties for delivering the training.

7.3 Process ensuring that training is cross-disciplinary.

The Interoperability Montana communications system embodies a grassroots/ground up cross-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional methodology. The training will be conducted in the same way the system has been developed using this ground up cross-disciplinary/multi-jurisdictional approach based upon the needs of the system users in all environments whether local, regional, tribal or statewide.



8. Usage

8.1 Plan for ensuring regular usage of the relevant equipment and the SOPs

The initial design of the IM system is a statewide shared system, such that interoperability is inherent in the system design. This approach allows users to interoperate on a daily basis as needed and whenever needed, to enhance their ability to deliver service. Such use of communications equipment and system on a daily basis ensures interoperability is second nature during a significant natural or manmade catastrophic event.

The existing, conventional systems in Montana are being replaced by the new system, they are not simply being augmented. As each entity is deployed on the new system, older, non-interoperable systems and equipment will be phased out. This development has already happened in Lewis & Clark County which began with 450 users and currently having over 1,400 cross disciplinary/multi-jurisdictional users. Current plans call for the standardization of radio programming through the use of templates developed by the IMTC. This will ensure local needs are met while still providing the required statewide interoperability.

As mentioned previously, it is not envisioned that every piece of conventional equipment will be immediately replaced. Instead, conventional interoperable repeaters will be placed on every trunked site to allow conventional, P25 equipment to operate on the trunked system. This provides trunked and non-trunked users the ability to talk to each other over the same set of equipment.

The IMTC will be providing a standardized SOP template for all jurisdictions participating in the IM. All local jurisdiction's interoperable communications SOPs will be reviewed by the IMTC to ensure interoperable capability for local, mutual aid, state, tribal and federal communications.

Montana's ultimate goal on the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum is a complete set of communications SOPs that are fully compliant with NIMS throughout the state, including all jurisdictions.

